

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KINGST 05162 291504Z
ACTION SCS-06

INFO OCT-01 ARA-14 ISO-00 CA-01 FSE-00 TRSE-00 PPTE-00
COME-00 /022 W

-----089826 291521Z /53

P 282025Z JUN 78

FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2032

UNCLAS KINGSTON 5162

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC, CPRS, ETRD, JM

SUBJECT: VISITORS CURRENCY DECLARATION REQUIREMENT

1. EFFECTIVE JUNE 26, JAMAICA IS REQUIRING FOREIGN VISITORS TO DECLARE AMOUNT OF FUNDS IN THEIR POSSESSION ON ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE. A NEW CURRENCY DECLARATION FORM HAS BEEN DEVELOPED FOR DISTRIBUTION ON AIRCRAFT BOUND FOR JAMAICA. THE FORM IS TO BE FILLED OUT DURING FLIGHT AND MUST BE STAMPED BY JAMAICAN AUTHORITIES AT AIRPORT, RETAINED BY THE VISITOR, AND RETURNED TO THE AUTHORITIES ON DEPARTURE. ANOTHER FORM, "GUIDE TO CURRENCY REGULATIONS IN JAMAICA," IS TO BE ISSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY, IN FLIGHT. THIS FORM EXPLAINS JAMAICAN CURRENCY REGULATIONS. COPIES OF BOTH FORMS ARE BEING POUCHED.

2. EMBASSY OFFICERS MET WITH OFFICIALS FROM THE TOURIST BOARD, MFA, BANK OF JAMAICA, AND CANADIAN HIGH COMMISSION TO DISCUSS NEW REQUIREMENT. AS NOW WRITTEN, THE DECLARATION FORM PRESENTS AN IMMEDIATE PROBLEM FOR VISITORS: IT REQUIRES TRAVELLERS TO DECLARE THE AMOUNT OF JAMAICAN DOLLARS (AND OTHER CURRENCY) IN THEIR POSSESSION WITHOUT ITSELF WARNING THE TRAVELLER THAT IT IS ILLEGAL TO TAKE JAMAICAN DOLLARS IN OR OUT OF JAMAICA, OR THAT ANY JAMAICAN DOLLARS IN THE POSSESSION OF A VISITOR WILL BE CONFISCATED ON ARRIVAL IN JAMAICA. THOUGH THE COMPANION FORM DOES SO INFORM VISITORS, BOTH FORMS ARE DISTRIBUTED ON AIRCRAFT, TOO

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LATE TO BE OF ANY HELP TO TRAVELLERS WHO HAVE LEGALLY PURCHASED JAMAICAN CURRENCY AT U.S. BANKS. THE JAMAICAN AUTHORITIES ASSURED US THAT THE DECLARATION FORM WOULD BE REVISED IN FUTURE TO INCLUDE SUCH A WARNING, AND INDICATED THAT THE JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD IS INFORMING TRAVEL AGENTS, AIRLINES, AND NORTH AMERICAN BANKS OF THE NEW CURRENCY DECLARATION REGULATIONS FOR VISITORS.

3. ANOTHER PROBLEM WITH THE NEW DECLARATION FORM IS THAT IT HAS BEEN PREPARED IN SINGLE COPY ONLY, THE COPY TO BE RETAINED BY THE VISITOR AND PRESENTED TO THE AUTHORITIES UPON DEPARTURE, PROPERLY COMPLETED TO SHOW HOW MUCH CURRENCY IS BEING TAKEN OUT OF JAMAICA. SINCE U.S. CITIZEN FREQUENTLY ENTER JAMAICA WITHOUT A PASSPORT, IT WILL NOT ALWAYS BE POSSIBLE TO STAPLE THE FORM TO A TRAVEL DOCUMENT. THE FORM CAN EASILY BE LOST, AND PROBABLY WILL BE LOST ON OCCASION. THE JAMAICAN AUTHROTITIES INFORMED US THAT TOURISTS WHO LOSE THE FORM WILL FIND THEMSELVES DELAYED AT THE AIRPORT, BUT WERE ADMITTEDLY VAGUE ABOUT THE EXTENT AND SERIOUSNESS OF THE DELAY.

4. TO MINIMIZE THE EFFECTS OF THESE NEW REGULATIONS ON AMERICAN TOURISTS, ESPECIALLY DURING THE INITIAL PHASE OF THE OPERATION, THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THE DEPARTMENT SUPPLEMENT THE EFFORTS OF THE JAMAICA TOURIST BOARD BY ISSUING AN APPROPRIATE TRAVEL ADVISORY TO INTERESTED PARTIES.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOURISM, DECLARATION, CURRENCIES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KINGST05162
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780269-0475
Format: TEL
From: KINGSTON
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780613/aaaaakmp.tel
Line Count: 81
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 43424f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SCS
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2182105
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: VISITORS CURRENCY DECLARATION REQUIREMENT
TAGS: CASC, CPRS, ETRD, JM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/43424f7e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014